



Health Services

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

September 6, 2016

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

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*To ensure access to high-quality,
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health care to Los Angeles County
residents through direct services at
DHS facilities and through
collaboration with community and
university partners.*



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TO: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D. *Mitchell Katz*
Director

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
(EMS) AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE AUGUST 19 AND 22,
2016 SPICE OVERDOSE MULTIPLE CASUALTY
INCIDENTS (MCI) IN THE SKID ROW AREA**

In preparation for discussion at your Board meeting concerning the recent EMS Agency mobilization due to the "Spice" poisonings, I thought it would be helpful to have some additional information about how MCI are currently handled.

The Department of Health Services' (DHS) EMS Agency is responsible for the oversight and coordination of emergency medical services throughout the County. In collaboration with the agency's constituent groups, including hospitals, fire departments and ambulance companies, the EMS Agency promulgates medical policy and procedures governing multiple casualty events.

In the case of the "Spice" events occurring on August 19 and 22, Los Angeles City Fire Department paramedics responded and utilized the procedures specified by the County's Prehospital Care Ref. 1019, Multiple Casualty Incidents (MCI).

MCI Policy Goals:

- Notify the hospitals early
- Ensure the hospital has beds and staff to accept patients
- Assist the paramedics with the patient destination
- Ensure the patients are transported to the appropriate hospitals
- Ensure that the patients are distributed among hospitals so that no single facility is overwhelmed

Los Angeles City Fire Department responded to the incidents along the Skid Row area to multiple patients with similar complaints related to the exposure of the drug commonly referred to as "Spice". When responding to multiple patients, the fire department paramedics triaged the patients by severity, initiated the MCI policy, and contacted the Medical Alert Center (MAC) (housed and managed by the EMS Agency).

The MAC is equipped to poll all of the hospitals in the area and identify the number and severity of the patients that each hospital is able to accept.

Hospitals that responded to the poll included:

California Medical Center
Good Samaritan Hospital
Kaiser Foundation Hospital – Sunset
LAC+USC Medical Center
Olympia Medical Center
Saint Vincent Medical Center
White Memorial Medical Center

In an effort to reduce the number of indigent patients transported to the local private hospitals, the EMS Agency's destination policies identify LAC+USC Medical Center as the nearest hospital for the Skid Row area. This has been a longstanding agreement between the hospitals and the EMS Agency. In this case, LAC+USC Medical Center received 50% of the patients from both incidents with the remaining 50% being distributed among local private hospitals. Per usual practice, each hospital enters patient information into the ReddiNet system as a mechanism to track the MCI.

Funding Mechanisms

A variety of funding mechanisms support activities by the EMS Agency and private hospitals for provision of care to indigent patients.

- Hospital Preparedness Program Federal Grant – DHS contracts with hospitals and coordinates supplemental funding for disaster preparedness planning which includes ReddiNet cost, equipment and supplies
- Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program – additional funds through Medicaid for hospitals that treat a large number of Medicaid and uninsured patients
- Physician Services to Indigents Payment (PSIP) Program – Pays physicians for emergency care of indigent patients

Conclusion

Overall, the paramedics and the hospitals did an excellent job of responding to this event. Multi-casualty events are challenging for any system, and we look forward to working with the Board of Supervisors and our EMS partners to prepare for future EMS events.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

MK:cc